Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 5 as follows:

Fig. 1 represents a system suitable for practicing the present invention. It includes relational database management system software (RDBMS) 10 residing in a server 12 and coupled to a data storage unit 11. The RDBMS 10 of the present invention is the IBM® DB2®,relational database product, although any relational database may be substituted. The server of the present invention may be, for example, IBM's UNIX-based pSeries™ server, Intel-based xSeries™ server, AS/400 based iSeries™ server, or OS/390 based zSeries™ mainframe running the compatible DB2 software. It may also be any hardware configuration capable of providing a suitable environment for running relational database software accessible by an application. The storage 11 may be any type of persistent storage such as an array of direct access storage devices, optical drives, holographic devices, tape, etc. and may be accessed via a network connection, SCSI bus, or other appropriate means 15. The RDBMS 10 of the detailed embodiment is accessed by application software 16 residing on a client workstation 18. Alternatively, it may run within the application space of a mainframe computer. The application software 16 ~~software16~~ makes requests to the RDBMS 10 for information and data over a connection 15 which may be, for example, an internet connection, a communications bus, or other appropriate ~~accesses~~ access means. Requests for information and data are typically in the form of a relational database query statement sent over connection 15 to the RDBMS. The RDBMS parses the query statement for processing, and writes, modifies or retrieves data from storage 11 in accordance with the query statement's content. The query assist tool 14 of the present invention is software residing between the application software 16

and the RDBMS middleware 10. According to the detailed embodiment, it resides on client 18, but it may also reside on a separate machine such as the server 12, as long as it is accessible by the application 16, e.g. via a network or TCP/IP connection.